

Strauss



STPL 513.010

ELECTRONICALLY REPROCESSED
TO SIMULATE STEREO

Der Rosenkavalier (Highlights)

Soloists and Orchestra
of the State Opera, Munich

Clemens Krauss, Conductor

RICHARD STRAUSS

DER ROSENKAVALIER (Highlights)



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Perhaps it is in the nature of the "Beast", but there have been precious few true collaborations between opera composer and librettist. Certainly it is more usual for the two to be at each others throats as were Mozart and Schikaneder. Mozart and da Ponte got on well enough to give us three undisputed masterpieces and Wagner never had to argue with his librettist but the one truly notable example of real collaboration in Opera is Richard Strauss and Hugo von Hofmannsthal.

For no less than six operas these two men worked together — not in peace and harmony true enough — but with mutual respect and understanding. Each had his own ideas of how a given work should be moulded. And yet it is a curious fact that a close study of these operas, and especially *Rosenkavalier*, show that the man who finally had the most to do with the final outcome of the operas was not the composer but the librettist.

Both Strauss and Hofmannsthal agreed at first that the opera was to be called, *Ochs*, after what then seemed to be the principal character. Later it was Hofmannsthal who saw that here was a chance for more than comic farce and a chance for a truly great characterization. Little by little he talked Strauss around to his way of thinking and the principal character became the beloved Princess von Werdenberg, better known as just the Marshallin. Nor was Hofmannsthal satisfied in drawing a single great portrait — *Rosenkavalier* is alive with them.

Rosenkavalier has parts for twenty-seven singers, most of which are of passing interest but there are five which are of interest, both as principal characters, and as human beings.

CHARACTERS

Princess of Werdenberg (The Marshallin) Wife of Field Marshall Prince of Werdenberg. The Princess is a woman of perhaps thirty-eight or thirty-nine; certainly no more than forty. In *Der Rosenkavalier* we find her having her last fling at love. She knows, with a sense of bitterness and yet resignation, that the day of her greatest beauty is over. She clings to Octavian, not because she is in love with him, but because he is in love with her and is, perhaps, the last of her many loves. She has a rich sense of humor, a great touch of kindness and, in the very best sense, is a personification of Royalty. Essentially, and above all these, she is a human being — perhaps the most human and touching figure that opera ever created.

Baron Ochs of Lerchenau. Ochs is a bit of a roué; he certainly is a gay old gentleman with both eyes on all the girls; moreover his manner of speech and his manners — or lack of them — leave something to be desired. None the less, Ochs is, in the final results, a gentleman. In the final scene when Ochs, who after all had been used rather badly, and who knows that the Marshallin has been having an affair with Octavian, is approached by the Marshallin who says to him, "Baron, you have seen nothing?" To which the Baron replies with a bow, "Sure sentiments so exquisite with admiration fill me quite. And none could ever say of any Lerchenau that he would spoil good sport."

Octavian (called Mignon — A young and noble Gentleman.) We are not certain that this is Octavian's first love affair but it is fairly sure. His anger when the dawning day intrudes on his love making is certainly not the mark of a more experienced lover. He is genuinely in love with the Marshallin, as he knows love. To him she represents all that is fine and good — that is not true love, perhaps, Octavian finds out when he meets Sophie, a girl more nearly his own age. Octavian is himself puzzled by his reactions at meeting Sophie. He realizes how much of a young boy he really is — certainly one of the best and surest signs of his advancing manhood. Finally Octavian realizes that the Marshallin was more a mother to him than a lover, and, of course, it is this bitter pill that saddens the Marshallin.

Sophie (Daughter of Herr von Faninal). There is no doubt at all that Octavian is Sophie's first love. She is a young girl, pretty of course, rather obviously unused to her father's new found importance, as Hofmannsthal and Strauss make plain.

Herr von Faninal (A Rich Merchant, Newly Enobled). Faninal is a self-important stuffed shirt. He has money but no notion at all of the proper manners of Royalty. He is determined that Sophie will marry Ochs or else. Faninal is a type of man still very prevalent today and not a whit less obnoxious than in the days of Marie Theresa.

These excerpts, are taken from a complete recording of the Opera (Vox — PL7774.)

The first music on this record is that of the Prelude and opening scene to the words, "Ich hab' dich lieb!" We are in the beautiful bedroom of the Marshallin. Around, and near a screen are pieces of attire — both feminine and male. On a sofa reclines the Princess and on a low settee beside her rests Octavian.

Octavian pours out his love in a paean of praise to the Princess. The Marshallin, who has heard it all many times before but like any woman still loves to hear the same phrases, listens only half seriously but with a tenderness which marks her entire part. When he protests, to her mild rebuke, that, "I am thy Boy!" She tenderly replies, "Du bist mein Bub', du bist mein Schatz! Ich hab' dich lieb!" (Thou art my Boy. Thou art my love. I love thee so.)

Sounds are heard from outside the bedroom. The lovers fear that it is the return of the Princess' husband. Octavian hides himself and quickly dresses as a maid much to the Marshallin's amusement. The "Noise" is none other than Baron Ochs who enters to demand that the Princess help him get properly married to Sophie. Ochs sees Octavian, still disguised as a maid, and makes a pass at "her" with rather good results. Now there enters the Princess' room a bewildering procession of cooks, milliners, singers, flute players and animal dealers. This charming custom was very much in vogue during the Reign of Maria Theresa and gave the Lady of the House a chance to hear complaints, see to the evening meal and plan her day first thing in the morning. Finally the noisy group leaves and the Princess asks Octavian to bear a Silver Rose, which Ochs left the bride-to-be. This was another of the charming customs of the day.

Our next recorded excerpt begins with the words, "Sei Er nur nicht, wie alle Männer sind," and continues to the words, "Jetzt sei Er gut und folg' Er mir."

In this scene the Princess has ordered Octavian to leave her with the Rose. He again protests his love for her and she quietly and earnestly tells him that soon, tomorrow perhaps, he will find another. Again Octavian protests his undying affection but the wise Princess knows better.

The next excerpt begins shortly after the beginning of Act II. Octavian has brought the Rose to Sophie's house. (Beginning with the words: "Mir ist die Ehre —" and ending with the words, "— Den will ich nie vergessen bis an meinen Tod".) The scene begins, formally enough, with the presentation but both Sophie and Octavian suddenly and inexplicably find themselves very much in love. Sophie especially, who stumble all over her acceptance speech. Both sing, almost to themselves, in one of the most beautiful scenes of opera.

The Baron interrupts this tender interlude and is presented. Naturally Sophie doesn't like him. Octavian, rather tactlessly, picks a quarrel with him, draws his sword and wounds the Baron in the hand. Sophie bursts into tears and says she'll never marry the Baron. Faninal says that it's either the Baron or a Convent.

The Finale to Act II, recorded here, starts with the words, "Zwei Stunden noch zu Tisch" continues to the end of the act. The Baron is left alone with Annina, a conspirator's helper. She hands him a letter which he asks her to read. It makes a date with a certain lady for the following night. Naturally Ochs will be there. As he says, "I have all the Luck!" Annina tries, most unsuccessfully, to get a tip from him then leaves. The so-called, *Rosenkavalier Waltz* naturally runs all through the opera but it centers in this scene.

Act III opens with Octavian again disguised as the Marshallin's maid. It is "she" who is to keep the date with the baron. The poor man is subjected to every kind of trick including, to list only the best, a woman who claims to be his wife, a batch of children who run around calling, "Papa! Papa!" and a policeman who tries to arrest him for leading young girls astray. Faninal and Sophie arrive very conveniently and Faninal is horrified as is Sophie; who probably knew all along that it was Octavian's work. The Princess arrives and Octavian reveals himself to the confused Baron.

The final music begins with the words, "Eh bien, hat Sie kein freundlich Wort fuer mich?" and continues to the end of the opera.

For awhile Sophie thinks of her father but Octavian's love is stronger and they embrace. The Princess regards this a little bitterly and reminds Octavian that she foretold that he would find a new and younger love. Seemingly for the first time two young people realize that the Princess is present. There is a moment of hesitation then the Marshallin says to Sophie very wistfully, "So quickly did you learn to love him?" The Marshallin realizes now that Octavian is lost to her. With sadness she tells Sophie that Octavian will find a cure for her pale cheeks. The Marshallin watches for a second and then slips out — the two lovers are left alone. In a minute the Marshallin is back with Faninal with whom she obviously had words. Faninal gives his blessing and the two lovers run off stage arm in arm; Sophie dropping her handkerchief. The stage is empty for a moment. Then a door opens and in comes a little black boy with a taper in his hand. He looks for the handkerchief — finds it — and trips out.

So ends *Der Rosenkavalier*; one of the most human operas ever written.

Notes by WARD BOTSFORD

VOX

**RICHARD STRAUSS
DER ROSENKAVALIER**

Highlights

- Band 1: ACT I - Introduction and Opening Scene
(Ursuleac-Milinkovic)
Band 2: ACT I - Marshallin's Monologue
and Final Duet (Ursuleac-Milinkovic)
Band 3: ACT II - Presentation of the Silver Rose
(Milinkovic-Kern)

STPL 513.010-A
(VS 2848)
Electronically Reprocessed
to simulate Stereo

Side 1
26:32 min.

ORCHESTRA OF THE
STATE OPERA, MUNICH
CLEMENS KRAUSS, Conductor

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can also be played MONO

VOX

**RICHARD STRAUSS
DER ROSENKAVALIER**

Highlights

Band 1: ACT II - Waltz Scene of Baron Ochs, Finale
(Weger)

Band 2: ACT III - Trio, Duet & Finale
(Ursulac-Milinkovic-Kern)

STPL 513.010-B

(VS 2849)

Electronically Reprocessed
to simulate Stereo

Side 2
25:00 min.

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